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SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS FROM SOUTHERN REGIONAL COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT S-44: FACTORS IN THE ADJUSTMENT OF FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN LOW-INCOME RURAL AREAS OF THE SOUTH.

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A group of rural sociologists initiated this 1958-1965 research project for the purpose of increasing knowledge about social and economic adjustments of low-income people in the rural areas of the South. Factors found to be associated with the adjustment of low-income families and individuals were anomia, level-of-living, joint decision making, job mobility aspiration, social participation, migration, and communication. These factors affected adjustment differently when people were categorized as homemakers, non-whites, or retirees. It was concluded that rural poverty cannot be attributed to a lack of ambition, and that a good educational program and job opportunities would alleviate many problems of rural people. (ES)

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PREFACE

Southern Regional Research Project S-44, from which this synthesis was developed, had the title, "Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Areas of the South." As the rather long list of reports, papers, and other publications indicates, a great deal of professional time and energy was expended on the project. Part of this was spent in the core activity of gathering and analyzing data from a regional sample and the rest in closely related projects within the participating states. Support for the project came from the Agricultural Experiment Stations in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Caroiina, Tennessee, and Texas, and from the Economic Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The project was active on a regional basis from 1958 to 1965 with some of the state projects starting before and others continuing since that period. The focus was on adjustment of low-income rural people with adjustment being defined in terms of social and economic criteria, taking into account the interests of the individual and the family as well as those of the society of which they are a part. As a result, a substantial amount of information was obtained on attitudes and the social and economic situations of the sample families in seven states. The results of the analysis of these data should be of great utility to the personnel of action agencies both at the program development and application levels. For the former there are indications of the areas of needed action and of the types of approaches that might be most effective. For the latter these reports provide a broad basis for comparison with the local situation as the worker knows it.

The workers on the project have been motivated principally by their interest in serving the needs of the people in low-income rural areas. It is their sincere hope that these materials will prove useful for these people in their problematic circumstances.

Charles L. Cleland
University of Tennessee
Chairman, S-44 Technical Committee

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Virlyn A. Boyd and Carolyn A. Morgan[1]/

INTRODUCTION

Several years before the "War on Poverty" was organized by the Federal government, a group of rural sociologists in the Southeastern states joined together in a cooperative regional research effort in an attempt to increase the level of knowledge about low-income people in rural areas of the South. The research project was entitled "Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Rural Areas of the South" and was conducted during the period 1958 to 1965. It was focused on the social and economic adjustment of low-income rural people, taking into account the interests of the individual and the family, as well as those of the society of which they were a part. Support for the project came from the Agricultural Experiment Stations in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas and from the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. For a broader statement about the S-44

1/ Associate Professor of Rural Sociology and Rural Sociology Assistant, respectively. This research was financed by contract funds from the Office of Economic Opportunity. The authors gratefully acknowledge this financial assistance. The assistance of the many individuals who aided in the accumulation of a complete file of research papers, bulletins, and theses and dissertations based on S-44 research and in reviewing the synthesis at various stages is also gratefully acknowledged.

Project, see the Preface. The sampling procedure and research methodology used in the study have been described by Cleland (15).2/ The general areas from which the sample families and individuals were selected are shown in Figure 1.

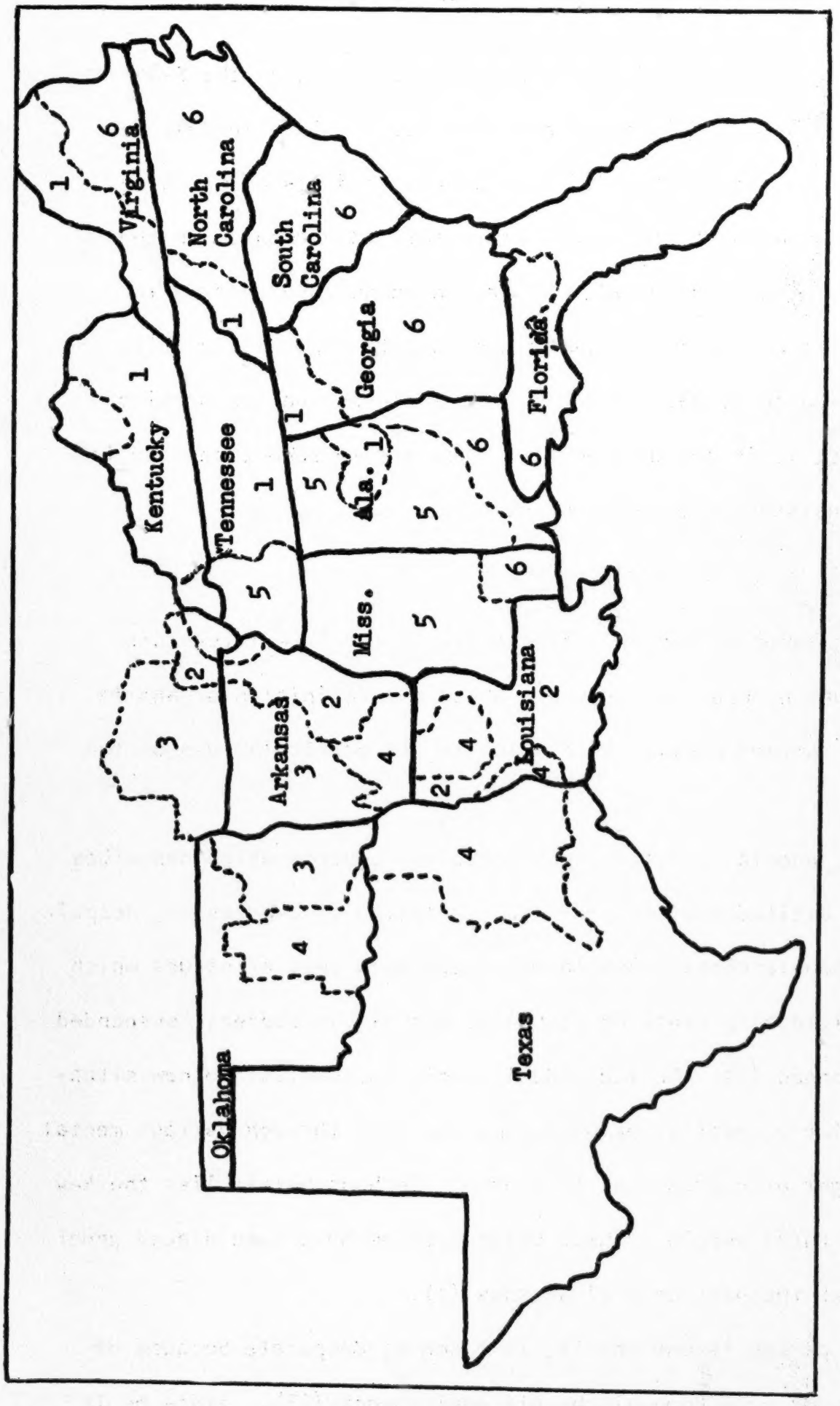
As pointed out by Cleland in the Preface, this research effort resulted in a large number of papers and publications.3/ Although the regional project was officially closed as of June 30, 1965, several publications are still in process by personnel of the cooperating states.

The purpose of this report is to present a synthesis of the findings from Southern Regional Research Project S-44 that might be useful to personnel engaged in action programs designed to alleviate the problems of low-income people in rural areas of the United States. A more detailed statement of the findings reported in each title is given in the Annotated Bibliography cited above. In instances where copies of these publications might be desired, their availability should be explored with the author or the Agricultural Experiment Station involved.

2/ This and subsequent numbers in parenthesis refers to items included in the Bibliography beginning on page 29 of this report.

3/ Morgan, Carolyn A. and Boyd, Virlyn A., Annotated Bibliography of Publications and Reports Resulting From Southern Regional Cooperative Research Project S-44: Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Rural Areas of the South, AE 289, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Clemson, March, 1966.

Figure 1



GENERALIZED AREAS OF S-44 SOUTHERN REGIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

1. Appalachian Mountains and Border Areas
2. Mississippi Delta
3. Ozark Ouachita Mountains and Border
4. Sandy Coastal Plains of Ark., La., and Texas
5. Southeastern Hilly
6. Southern Piedmont and Coastal Plains

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ADJUSTMENT

The primary concern of the researchers associated with the S-44 project was the adjustment of low-income families and individauals in the rural South. In this section of the report, findings of the project have been grouped by factors related to this adjustment. In the following section, the findings will be presented as they related to specific categories of people. Because the results reported in this synthesis are based on research done by several investigators working in several states, it is not unusual that they are in some cases and in some degree inconsistent with each other.

Anomia

The concept "anomia" was used frequently in the S-44 literature. However, there was no precise agreement about the definition of anomia. Each researcher defined anomia in relation to his particular use of the concept.

In general, anomia is a socio-psychological concept which describes the feelings or attitudes of an individual relating to depression, despair, pessimism, and hopelessness. Anomia may occur when sets of values which regulate an individual's sense of stability are either suddenly suspended or radically changed (3). An individual unable to readjust to new situations either quickly, easily, or over time may pass through various mental stages from slight discouragement to anomia. Perhaps herein lies the key to anomia among rural people. Their value systems have been placed under heavy stress over the past several decades (3).

The anomic person is one who is, in a sense, desperate because of the changed demands made upon him by his environment (23). Since he is

not able to cope with these new demands, he gives in to subconscious feelings of hopelessness and rejection of social values. In extreme situations he may withdraw from the realities of the world in which he lives.

Social changes in modern society are characterized by a rapidity of movement and magnitude of events. It is not surprising to note that many individuals respond and adjust with difficulty to behavioral situations by using old modes of action. Because of rapidly changing social and economic conditions, unconscious attitudes no longer enable the individual to effectively meet day-to-day situations as they arise. The end result is the existence of personal frustration which varies in intensity with age, education, occupation, and income levels.

With regard to older persons, loneliness is one aspect of anomia to be considered. The intensification of anomia among the aged is partially explained by the fact that companionship with kin and friends often lessens with advancing age (9).

Analysis of S-44 data revealed that anomia differed greatly between whites and nonwhites in all states with nonwhites being more prone to anomia, because the values of society have been established, for the most part, by the whites. In addition, those persons at the lower stages of economic development (retirees, physically disabled persons, and small scale farmers) tended to be more anomic than those persons not in these categories. Also, household heads tended to be more anomic than homemakers.

It was found that, for all states studied, persons who were better adjusted occupationally were less likely to be anomic than persons who were less well adjusted occupationally. Gainfully employed nonfarm workers

were found to more anomic in an industrialized area than in a rural non-industrialized area.

Persons high in anomia were the least likely to own their own homes and to share in making family decisions; they were most likely to express religion as their source of greatest satisfaction. This may have been partially a reflection of their age.

Those who were lowest in anomia were characterized by their willingness to borrow money to improve their current status. Generally these people were also the ones who were highest in educational attainment, most likely to be employed outside the home, least likely to go without the necessities of life, and most likely to consider the family their greatest source of satisfaction (61).

The measures of anomia used in project S-44 yielded data which strongly indicated that anomia was directly associated with age. Anomia increased as age increased.

One study (37) revealed a tendency for individuals who considered themselves to be deprived to score high on measures of anomia regardless of their actual socio-economic status. On the other hand, individuals who did not consider themselves to be deprived scored low on measures of anomia regardless of their existing socio-economic status.

Household heads and homemakers in the Appalachian Mountains region were found to be more anomic than those in the other southern regions studied.

Level-of-Living

Level-of-living can be narrowly or broadly defined depending upon its purpose and/or context. Generally, its aspects are limited to eco-

nomic goods and services. One definition of level-of-living describes it as "the average level of current consumption or utilization of goods and services" (38). Level-of-living is not identical with income or expenditure level. It is computed from information about material possessions such as gas or electric range, piped water, hot water heater, telephone, inside flush toilet, bath or shower, home freezer, automatic washing machine, kitchen sink, and vacuum cleaner.

A level-of-living scale allows comparisons of families to be made in terms of family size, expenditures, and managerial abilities as reflected in the quantity of economic goods possessed. Four types of level-of-living scales were developed and used in connection with project S-44 (13). Because of differences in construction, the four scales did not measure exactly the same thing.

Results of the studies using the various scales showed that level-of-living was positively associated with the factors of education, social participation, participation in secular organizations, family income, residential satisfaction, and size of farm (34). As total family income increased, level-of-living increased with level-of-living being dependent upon income (1).

Anomia was found to be inversely associated with level-of-living; as level-of-living improved anomia became less intense or less prevalent. A low level-of-living characterized the men most willing to change from farm jobs to industrial (nonfarm) jobs.

White families were six times more likely to have <u>high</u> levels-of-living than Negro families, and Negro families were four times more likely to have <u>low</u> levels-of-living than white families. Educational attainment was seen

to influence levels-of-living. There was a low degree of association between attitude concerning the use of credit and level-of-living. Those persons who indicated religion as their source of greatest satisfaction tended to be characterized by low levels-of-living whereas those who selected family and kin as their source of greatest satisfaction were more concentrated in the high level-of-living category.

Joint Decision-Making

Recognizing that the process of decision-making is involved in adjustment, S-44 researchers included studies of patterns of decision-making in the family. They attempted to determine who, in the family was usually responsible for major decision--the husband, the wife, or the husband and wife jointly. It was hypothesized that adaptation might be more reasonably expected of those families characterized by joint decision-making.

A scale of five items was developed and utilized as a measure of joint decision-making. The results indicated that patterns of decision-making in rural families vary according to a number of family characteristics as well as in terms of the family respondent who supplies the information.

Analysis of data supported the hypothesis that joint decision-making was positively associated with socio-economic status. It was found that a low level-of-living score was associated with low joint decision-making scores and that a high level-of-living score was related to higher joint decision-making scores (41).

Wives with low educational attainment (less than eight years of school) were less likely to share in making decisions than wives with a high school education. As the wife's income from outside work increased, she was more

likely to be involved in decision-making and usually had a higher joint decision-making score. Thus, a wife with a low level of education who received low wages was less likely to share in family decisions than those better educated wives who earned higher wages.

Further analysis of the data indicated that family attitudes were associated with joint decision-making. Low joint decision-making scores were positively related to lack of satisfaction with family income and a high level of anomia.

It appeared that those families which were in the best position as far as joint decision-making and adaptation to changes were concerned were those which enjoyed a higher income and level-of-living, the wife had a high school education, and the wife reflected a rather optimistic outlook that might be generally shared by the family.

In order to aid low-income rural families to make adjustments to changing conditions, opportunities for increased education, better job opportunities, and more insight with regard to planning for career, farm, and home should be provided (35).

Job Mobility Aspiration

Job mobility aspiration (23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33), in project S-44, refers to the worker's wishes for attaining what he considers to be a better job. To the worker, the job might be better because it means either higher status, better pay, better working conditions and fringe benefits, more stable employment, or some combination of these and similar features.

In general it was found that low-income rural southerners under investigation had very low levels of occupational aspiration. The male household heads were deeply aware that some other people lived better than they,

but at the same time they were realistic about the world in which they lived. They had developed or adjusted their level of aspiration to a point consistent with their prospects for achievement. The goals they set for themselves were not only realistic but were desired with considerable intensity as well.

Results of the research indicated that job mobility aspiration decreased as both age and education increased. Men with the poorest educational backgrounds were found to have the greatest desire to change jobs to improve their relative position.

Job mobility aspiration was found to vary with the source of a worker's income. Those who received all their income from farming had relatively low desires to change jobs to obtain improvement. On the other hand, those who received all their income from non-farm sources expressed greater interest in such changes. Operators of small farms (less than 50 acres) were more favorable toward job change than were operators of larger farms (50 acres or more).

Blue collar workers of all skill levels were found to hold favorable attitudes toward job change. As one would expect, job mobility aspiration was found to be more intense among those persons who were dissatisfied with their present job and income, those who emphasized secular values, and those who viewed society pessimistically.

Household heads, although satisfied with their way of life for themselves, generally expressed a preference for something different for their children. In many instances, they indicated that they felt that their way of life was no longer open to young people. The household heads universally desired high prestige occupations for their sons. There was some

tendency for farmers to desire their sons to enter farming; but, this desire was closely tied to the size of the existing farm operation with the more prosperous farmers being more likely to desire their sons to enter farming.

Low-income rural men indicated a willingness and desire to change jobs to improve their lot. Indications are, however, that they need outside help (financial and educational) in order to improve themselves. Although education and training are needed to prepare them for new jobs, they expressed little value orientation toward education, which is in most cases a prerequisite for better jobs.

It follows that attempts by action agencies to upgrade the employment status of such individuals would in all probability be more successful if they were preceded by programs designed to increase the value these individuals place on education. Also, attempts should be made to give these individuals a realistic set of expectations of what is in store for them both with and without various types and levels of education or vocational training.

Social Participation

The measure of social participation used in the S-44 study was the extent of voluntary participation in associations called formal organizations. This participation was considered to be important in considering the subject of adjustment because it provides the democratic basis for developing and sharing basic ideas which affect one's outlook on life. In the words of one of the researchers, voluntary associations "provide opportunity for social contacts; are channels for cultural expression or consummatory interests; provide decentralization of the forces of power

and counteract a monopoly of political power in a totalitarian state; and provide a basis for the promotion of the general welfare" (56). Associations are channels through which the dignity of the individual can be expressed. An individual carries to and through these associations his own values.

Analysis of S-44 data revealed certain characteristics about the social participation of low-income rural residents. From the research done, it was noted that as income increased, participation increased (1). A consistent and positive relationship existed between formal social participation and level-of-living with those having a higher level-of-living participating more (34). A higher level of social participation was reported by young homemakers than older ones (36), but in terms of the total sample, there was no significant association between type of participation and age except in the Appalachian Mountains region where church-centered participation increased with age (56). It was also noted that after about age 45, participation centered around the church.

There appeared to be a positive relationship between the homemaker's education and her level of social participation. Homemakers with the most formal education were more likely to participate in voluntary social organizations.

Studies of participation by color revealed that practically all social participation, especially in rural counties of the South, was within segregated color groupings (56). Nonwhites consistently rated lower than whites when race was cross-classified with level of social participation (36).

There was no over-all relationship between anomia and type of participation, but the lowest level of anomia occured in secular participants and

highly intensive participants. The higher degree of anomia found among members of church groups might be a strong resistive force which would prevent individuals in these groups from readily accepting new ideas (56). This finding may reflect the church's failure to minister to the social and economic needs of its members as well as to their spiritual needs. It was indicated, however, that change agents might reach approximately eighty percent of the household heads by working through churches and church-related organizations.

The low level of social participation reported by S-44 respondents indicates a lack of involvement on the part of the vast majority of the household heads. Even if the change agent is able to work through the existing organizations, he is not likely to reach a large proportion of low-income people. Through voluntary organizations, the change agent is least likely to reach the extremes of the adult ages and those who need assistance the most.

The implication for action agencies is that they should utilize existing organizations such as churches. They will be forced, however, to make most of their contacts with people in these rural low-income areas through channels other than existing voluntary social organizations.

Migration

Part of the current reduction of the farm population is due to out-migration. Since underemployment is one of the problems in the area studied this out-migration could be considered to be a desirable adjustment on the part of at least some of the residents of the area.

A Tennessee study revealed that the majority of the offspring of the household head migrated. The median number of years of school completed

by the migrants was nine. Those with less education tended to stay closer to home and to live in the open country, while those with more education tended to move greater distances and to live in large cities (14).

A steadily decreasing proportion of migrants moving to farms was observed along with a consistent increase in the trend towards migrating from rural areas to towns and small cities. Generally, younger migrants tended to locate either outside of the state from which they migrated or beyond the borders of adjacent counties. They also were more likely to settle in towns or small cities. Older migrants tended to locate closer to home, staying within the ring of adjacent counties and finding places in the open country.

There was some indication that those offspring of rural residents who remained at home until they were twenty-five years of age or more tended to go into farming. Those in this group who did move did not go very far from their parents' home.

In terms of regional differences, Appalachian Mountains household heads held more favorable attitudes toward moving than did other southerners.

While migration of the farm population does not assure adjustment, it could be a successful means of adjustment for those farm migrants who have the requisite skills and who move into areas of higher income (1). The two most explicit characteristics of individuals considered to influence mobility were age and education. Education, both general and technical, is widely recognized as a channel for mobility (39).

Communication

Assuming that one factor accounting for the low-income problem in rural areas stems from a failure of our present channels of communication

to reach low-income people, an investigation was made of the communication processes of low-income farmers (66). For purposes of this study, these farmers were classified into groups of high income (with an average annual income of $3,339) and low income (average annual income of $1,153).

Members of the high-income group were characterized by (1) their tendencies to use governmental agencies that give direct aid to the farmer, (2) their relatively high church attendance, (3) their referral to the county agent as a preferred source of information, and (4) some doubt as to the county agent's being the most reliable source of information.

On the other hand, members of the low-income group (1) relied more extensively upon the use of almanacs, (2) used governmental agencies giving direct aid to farmers less extensively, (3) referred less frequently to the county agent as the most preferred source of information, and (4) sought the assistance of the county agent slightly more often than the high-income farmers.

Both groups evidenced low attendance at agricultural meetings, placed high emphasis on religion and moral values, adopted approved farm practices at a similar rate, gave similar evaluation of the county agent, and had similar access to farm-centered communication channels.

Those farmers with the highest socio-economic status tended to adopt more approved farm practices than others within the high-income group. The high adopters were also relatively high in participation in farm organizations, and gave local farm meetings as the best way to obtain needed approved farming information.

There was a direct relationship between the rate of adoption of farm practices and the socio-economic status of the persons influencing the

"adopters." Those individuals who influenced farmers rated high in adopting approved farm practices tended to have higher socio-economic status than those individuals who influenced farmers rated low in adopting approved practices.

It was indicated that along with a greater participation in agricultural organizations went a greater rate of adoption of approved practices. Those farmers with the greatest participation in agricultural organization had a higher adoption rate and tended to have a higher level-of-living than other farm operators.

If low-income farmers are to be aided in raising their level-of-living, agencies must set up programs to work through persons of the area who influence the operators. This suggests that an educational program is needed for the influential farmers so that they may be brought to accept approved farming information and in turn influence others to adopt approved farm practices. There is also a need for the educational agencies to carry out programs (meetings, demonstrations, etc.) on a neighborhood basis.

Action agencies should, therefore, capitalize on the experiences of existing programs, such as those of the Agricultural Extension Service.

ADJUSTMENT RELATED TO SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE

In taking an overall look at the research projects undertaken as a part of S-44, it becomes apparent that certain specific categories of people deserve special consideration. The research results relating to three such groups are presented in this section of the report.

Homemakers

Low-income rural homemakers were studied separately to gain insight into their patterns of adjustment. Because of the demands of modern family life plus the increasing opportunities for women outside the home, the homemaker's role in the adjustment process was considered to be important.

It was discovered that in rural low-income areas, fewer married homemakers were employed than unmarried ones, and that homemakers with young children were the least likely to be employed. The findings indicated that as homemakers aged, their level of anomia increased; their level of social participation decreased; and they became more conservative in borrowing money (36).

The formal education of the homemaker was found to be an important factor in her adjustment. Evidence supported the belief that the educational level of the homemaker was directly related to the family's level-of-living. As educational level increased anomia decreased and the homemaker felt less isolated and insecure; that is, she could see a possible future for herself and her children. There was support for the proposition that as educational levels rise, the homemaker derives greater satisfaction from her family relations and is less inclined to find refuge and escape in her religion. Women with the most formal education were found to participate more in the social life of the community (36).

One finding that has implications for action groups and future research projects had to do with some possible indirect results of the level of the homemaker's education. The research results indicated that the homemaker's level of education and social participation coupled with the inability of the male household head to work might in some cases create in the homemaker a level of anomia that would result in efforts by the family to take steps toward increasing their family income (46). This observation was made with regard to the Appalachian Mountains subregion where this particular study was conducted.

In general, as educational level increased, rural low-income homemakers appeared to be moving, however slowly, in the direction of attaining a level-of-living more in keeping with national and regional standards and consistent with their own potential abilities.

Even though race did not appear to be closely associated with the homemakers' level of anomia, it was associated with the homemakers' greatest source of satisfaction. As compared to whites, nonwhites found more satisfaction in religion than in family life. They were less inclined to borrow money, reported a lower level of social participation, and were found to be less satisfied with their family income than were white homemakers (36).

The homemakers' race appeared to be related to her chances of obtaining an education, helping the family by obtaining gainful employment for herself, and enjoying a high level-of-living. In addition, nonwhite homemakers were also less likely than white homemakers to own homes or to make plans for the future.

It was seen that low-income rural areas represent a potential source of woman power for the nation's labor force. Attitudes were not a block

to gainful employment for these women (63). Adjustment through providing employment opportunities for homemakers might make the greatest contribution to the existing households in these low-income areas (36).

Nonwhites

Analysis of S-44 data revealed certain variations in the adjustment characteristics of the whites and nonwhites in the sample.

As compared to the white population, the nonwhites in the S-44 sample had a lower median level of education. Almost all the nonwhites were found to have high job mobility aspiration, and they were more favorably oriented towards job change than were the whites.

Anomia was found to differ greatly between whites and nonwhites in all states, with nonwhites tending to be more anomic. A high proportion of nonwhites is often associated with a complex of other social and economic conditions such as low income, low educational level, low social status, and low occupational status. For this reason, it would be difficult to assign race alone as a causative factor for the high level of anomia among the nonwhites in the sample (12).

When race was cross-classified with intensity of social participation, nonwhites consistently rated lower than whites. In the Mississippi Delta and Southeastern Hilly subregions, nonwhites participated socially less than whites. There was a difference in social participation from one region to another. Practically all social participation in the rural counties of the South included in the S-44 study was within segregated color groupings.

The majority of nonwhite household heads expressed dissatisfaction with their incomes, but satisfaction with their residences.

There was likely to be more sharing in decision-making among those nonwhite families with income and level-of-living high enough so that the wife did not feel it necessary to seek gainful employment, and among those nonwhite families where the wife, although employed, earned a higher than average income.

The variable of color can be singled out as the fundamental factor accounting for the seriousness of the adjustment problems in the Mississippi Delta. The Mississippi Delta is characterized by a low level-of-living, low total family income, low participation, low joint decision-making, small proportions of farm and home owners, and a large proportion of nonwhites. It is relatively a very depressed area.

The results of the S-44 research indicate that the problems of adjustment facing low-income areas of the rural South are more acute among the nonwhites than the whites.

Retirees

Because the social security and public welfare programs tend to institutionalize the care or the aged, the retirement trend today is toward dependence in old age upon government rather than self or family for survival and comfort (7).

With longer life-expectancies continuously increasing the number of people of retirement age and older living in our society, the small farm is a possible retirement location. For retired persons, the small farm offers self-regulated employment and opportunities to satisfy inherent creative urges (9).

Small farms can supplement inadequate retirement incomes. In some localities, an elderly couple need own no more than one-half acre of land,

and this amount of land can quite frequently be found in or near small villages, where public services are readily available. Villages offer an escape from the loneliness that often results from being stranded in the open country (9).

Economic security is the one necessary condition for effectively widening the horizons of older people. Great values can be achieved from recreational and cultural pursuits when they attain a status value equal to that of work. Because of common interests, the rural community is in a unique position to join forces with its own aged members for economic and social advancement.

Results of research done in Kentucky (79) suggest that retirement had little adverse psychological impact upon the sampled retired urban and rural workers. In another study (81), retired persons did not differ significantly from employed persons in mental outlook, but they reported more health ailments and more role impairments than did those who were employed.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The research done by the participants in project S-44 proved to be fruitful in yielding a variety of implications, recommendations, and suggestions for alleviating the conditions under which low-income rural people are living both in the South and in the rest of the nation. In some instances, the results may seem to be contradictory. The reader is reminded that different researchers reported on different phases of the overall project and frequently dealt with different subgroups or setments of the sample.

One of the conclusions was that the rural poverty problem in the South cannot be attributed to the lack of ambition and desire on the part of the rural poor to improve their economic situation. These people do lack the personal and financial resources needed to help themselves (30). However, the economic and social problems in low-income areas are so complex that no simple remedial answer presents itself.

Education

Low level of education was seen as a primary deterrent to the adjustment prospects of low-income people studied in the S-44 Project (25, 28). The need for education was clearly stated by the S-44 researchers.

There are certain conditions which need to be met before an educational program is established. The poor need not only to be educated, academically and vocationally, but they also need to be taught to value education as a continuous adult interest. This would involve a change in their commonly held attitude that "education is for kids" (30). In conjunction with academic and vocational training, the poor need guidance, counselling, and financial aid. Providing these services would involve the recruit-

ment and training of necessary personnel and the provision for the financial cost of conducting such an extensive program (70).

It was concluded that adult as well as youth programs are essential (69). Particular attention should be directed toward the Negro minority group with the Mississippi Delta region as a focal point for future programs. In that area, the problems of adjustment were found to be the most acute and people possessed the least potentials for achieving adjustment (49, 69). Educational programs should be directed toward the needs of families in which the male household heads and the homemakers are between the ages of twenty and fifty and in which there are children of preschool and school age (70).

A need for educational agencies to carry out programs on a neighborhood basis was noted. An educational program is needed for those persons who influence the attitudes and actions of others so that they may be brought to accept approved farming information and in turn influence others to adopt approved farming practices.

For those individuals who understand and accept the widespread occupational aspirations and values of the nation, systematic vocational training programs for nonfarm work is needed. For those people in low-income rural areas who do not understand or who reject the widespread occupational aspirations and values, a more complex action program is required. An educational program aimed at changing their perceptions and goals from subcultural to national orientation must precede vocational programs (62).

Other Factors

One of the basic causes of persistence of low-income in rural areas is the subcultural orientation which the people hold. Their nationally

substandard conditions are considered quite acceptable by local residents; however, they are substandard when compared with the rest of the nation (54).

Greater emphasis should be directed toward raising the level-of-living and income of nonwhite families and bringing them more closely in line with those levels enjoyed by the general population (48).

Low-income rural areas represent a potential source of woman power for the nation's labor force. Research results indicate that attitudes are not a block to gainful employment for these women (63).

The variations of adjustment factors between regions must be taken into consideration for effective programs based on the area approach (43). There were clearcut differences between Central Appalachian rural families and other southern rural families. These differences were sufficiently large to justify the establishment of a specialized agency to deal specifically with the area and the people of Appalachia (21).

One big problem is the establishment of lines of communication with the lower socio-economic groups who appear to have become, at least in part, detached from society through apathy resulting from anomia (55).

Economic security is the one necessary condition for effectively widening the horizons of older people. Retirement systems, pensions, etc. need to be revised or extended to prevent retired rural residents from causing large farms to lie dormant. The possibility of older persons retiring in or near small villages where they might have a small plot of land to work was suggested by one researcher (7, 9).

Working for Acceptance of Action Programs

Acceptance of an action program may be easier if it can be defined in terms acceptable to the people of the area so that they do not have

to sacrifice their old values for the new. Action proposals should be related to the value system of the family rather than that of the worker (69).

In order to bring about change, it seems necessary that people see the need for change and recognize the channels through which it may be attained (61). People work harder to achieve goals they have established themselves than they do to achieve superimposed goals. The most consistently successful technique has been through the development of strong person-to-person relationships. One researcher pointed out that people will change, but: (a) "people resist changes that appear to threaten basic securities," (b) "people resist proposed changes they do not understand," and (c) "people resist being forced to change" (51, 53).

If farm operators are to be aided in raising their level-of-living, agencies must set up programs to work through persons in the area who influence the farmers. In each area, the change agent would be wise to work through the small number of active and influential household heads. It will be up to the agent to find ways to work through the existing church organizations where he may reach up to approximately eighty percent of the participants, or else choose between three other alternatives: (a) "establish a new organization to promote interests," (b) "work with each individual separately," (c) "be satisfied to work with those whom he can reach now and forget the rest." The decision will depend upon how much time and effort he has available and how much importance he places upon his objectives (55).

Interdisciplinary Approach

The solution of adjustment problems in low-income areas may be accelerated and enhanced by a coordinated effort on the part of all related

agencies and organizations (1, 48). In addition, the simultaneous attack on common problems by neighboring states would accelerate the success of the programs if appropriate cooperation and communication could be maintained (49).

An interdisciplinary approach (rural sociology, economics, psychology, education, social work, anthropology, political science, and other disciplines) would be indispensable for a complete action program for solving the problems created by low incomes, low levels-of-living, and low educational achievements (48, 51).

Outlook for the Future

Research results of Project S-44 lead to the conclusion that a high proportion of low-income people lack both the financial and human resources required to help themselves overcome their poverty condition. This inability to improve their social and economic situation does not result from a lack of desire for a better way of live (27). Rather, the evidence suggests that if these people could see opportunities for improvement, the desire would appear.

In that adjustment begets adjustment, a complete lack of it diminishes the possiblities of its occurrence. Those who are desperately in need are often not well adjusted, and in many cases, they are unable to plan ahead for themselves or their children in any realistic fashion (46).

Adjustment on the part of low-income rural families to changing conditions will be made possible only by the provision of opportunities for increased education, better job opportunities, and more insight with regard to planning for career, farm, and home (35).

The low-income problem in the rural South is not hopeless. Psychologically, there is a desire to improve through better jobs. The inhibiting factors are unsatisfactory educational backgrounds and lack of stimulation in the form of available employment opportunities and financial assistance.

The need is for the recruitment and training of qualified personnel and providing for the cost of carrying out an extensive program (70).

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